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Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 102349 TOSEC 040002

FOR PERSIKO AND SPIEGEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN: REVIEW OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

1. BACKGROUND. DISAPPOINTED BY THEIR FAILURE TO PLAY A MORE SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, THE SOVIETS EVIDENTLY SEE AFRICA AS AN AREA WHOSE INDIGENOUS INSTABILITIES OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES. ESPECIALLY NOTABLE HAS BEEN THE RECENT INCREASE IN SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, WHICH AMOUNTED TO ABOUT DOLS 654 MILLION IN 1974-1976, OR MORE THAN DOUBLE THEIR DELIVERIES IN THE 13 PREVIOUS YEARS. PRESIDENT PODGORNY PLEDGED ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TA ANIA, MOZAMBIQUE AND THE ZIMBABWE NATIONALIST FORCES DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO AFRICA. THE SOVIET SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND THEIR MUCH SMALLER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE APPEARS DESIGNED TO: A) INCREASE SOVIET POLITICAL
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INFLUENCE IN THE AREA WHILE DECREASING THAT OF THE WEST AND THE PRC; B) PROVIDE A QUID PRO QUO FOR THE ACQUISITION OF SOVIET BASE RIGHTS (UNTIL RECENTLY, A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF SOVIET AID WENT TO SOMALIA, AND NOW IT IS BEING DIRECTED AT MOZAMBIQUE AND ETHIOPIA); AND C) SUPPORT SOVIET CREDENTIALS AS A REVOLUTIONARY FORCE IN THE WORLD. WHILE TH SOVIETS CLEARLY WANT TO SUPPORT THEIR FRIENDS IN

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SO HERN AFRICA, THEY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY WANT TO AVOID DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN ANY CONFLICT THAT MIGHT ERUPT. IN THE HORN OF AFRICA THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY HAVE CONCLUDED, HOPEFULLY IN ERROR, THAT THE POLITICO-STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES IN POPULOUS REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA ARE WORTH THE RISK TO THEIR STRATEGIC-MILITARY POSITION IN SOMALIA WHERE PRESIDENT SIAD IS ACTING MORE LIKE A NATIONALIST THAN A SOCIALIST.

2. TALKING POINTS

-- WE ARE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING SOVIET ROLE IN AND SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO AFRICA.

-- THE SOVIETS ARE CONSOLIDATING THEIR POSITION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND HAVING APPARENTLY CONCLUDED THAT THE RHODESIAN TALKS WILL FAIL, ARE STEPPING UP ARMS SHIPMENTS TO MOZAMBIQUE INCLUDING TANKS AND SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES), TANZANIA AND THE ZIMBABWE NATIONALIST GROUPS. THIS LIMITS THE TIME WE HAVE FOR SETTLEMENT OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES.

-- SOVIET ACTIONS IN EHTIOPIA APPARENTLY WERE BASED ON THE EXPECTATION THAT THEY COULD MAINTAIN THEIR FACILITIES AND HITHERTO STRONG POSITION IN SOMALIA, A JUDGMENT WHICH APPARENTLY UNDER-ESTIMATED SOMALI NATIONALISM AND THE HEREDITARY CONFRONTATION WITH ETHIOPIA. CHRISTOPHER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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